

NEWS

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NEW PASSENGER TERMINAL ON SCHEDULE FOR 2006 CRUISE SEASON

Thirty Cruises Slated to Leave From Baltimore Beginning in Spring

BALTIMORE, MD – Cruise passengers from the Midwest to the East Coast will have another great reason to choose Maryland's Port of Baltimore as their point of departure come spring 2006. That is when a new, more accessible dedicated passenger cruise terminal will open its doors and provide passengers with a first class gateway to Bermuda and the Caribbean.

In October, the Maryland Port Administration (MPA) began to make extensive modifications to an existing 65,000 square foot building to create a permanent passenger cruise facility that will accommodate 2,900 people and provide parking for more than 500 vehicles. It will be centrally located right off Interstate 95 in the South Locust Point area. Work is scheduled for completion in April, one month before the first scheduled cruise on May 12.

"Tourism is key to Maryland's strong economy," said Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. "Building the cruise business at the Port of Baltimore will continue to fuel the positive momentum we are seeing all across the state. Cruise customers want a positive landside experience and easy access to their ship. This great new facility will provide them with both."

The new passenger terminal is situated on 14 acres of land located right off Interstate 95. It is 2.7 miles from downtown Baltimore, 10 miles from BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, 20 miles from Annapolis, and 40 miles from Washington, DC. The cost of building the new facility is approximately \$13 million. This includes construction of a paved parking lot and dredging operations to accommodate large cruise ships.

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“Maryland’s Port of Baltimore is poised and ready to enhance our cruise business,” said MPA Executive Director Brooks Royster. “Baltimore is within a six-hour drive for 36 million people and an overnight drive for 186 million people. As the Port celebrates its 300th anniversary in 2006, what better way to celebrate that milestone than by making a commitment like this to a growing part of our business plan.”

In 2005 there were 28 cruises and six port calls that left from Maryland’s Port of Baltimore. Royal Caribbean had 5-night cruises to Bermuda and 9-night cruises to the Caribbean. The 2005 cruise season produced more than 270 direct jobs.

The 2006 cruise schedule will include 28 direct departure cruises from Baltimore, with two port calls. Additional cruises may be added during the season. The first cruise liner leaving the new terminal will be a 9-night Royal Caribbean excursion to the Western Caribbean onboard the Grandeur of the Seas on May 12.

The new, dedicated cruise terminal will replace the current cruise facility located in the busy Dundalk Marine Terminal.

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Three hundred years old in 2006, the Port of Baltimore has consistently remained one of the top U.S. ports for several reasons. Located more than 170 miles inland, Baltimore is the closest U.S. Atlantic seaport to major mid-Western destinations and manufacturing centers. Nestled in the heart of the fifth largest, second wealthiest consumer market in the nation, Baltimore is a prime distribution location. The public terminals of the Port of Baltimore recently surpassed a brand new milestone - 8 million tons of general cargo in FY 2005. In 2004, Maryland’s Port of Baltimore was ranked fourteenth in tonnage and seventh in cargo value nationally.